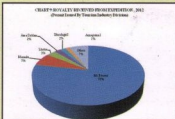




NEPAL TOURISM NEWS

A Quarterly Publication of Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation (MoCTCA), Nepal



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VIEWPOINTS
Hon'ble Ram Kumar Shrestha
Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation

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OBSERVING DIAMOND JUBILEE OF FIRST EVEREST ASCENT

Various ceremonies were organized in Kathmandu and Solukhumbu districts to mark the Diamond Jubilee or the 60th anniversary of the first ascent of Mt Everest this May. Sixty years ago, on May 29, Tenzing Norgay Sherpa and New Zealander Sir Edmund Hillary had scaled the world's highest peak for the first time.

Secretary of the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation (MoCTCA), Mr. Sushil Ghimire, addressing a gathering at the Hillary Park in Khumjung, Solukhumbu, said the government is committed to the development of sustainable mountain tourism.

Mr. Ghimire called on stakeholders to work jointly for the conservation of national heritages such as Lumbini and Mount Everest. A separate function was organized in Hillary School in Khumjung to raise awareness about climate change besides positioning Nepal in the international tourism market.

On May 29, the government honored family members of Tenzing Norgay and Hillary, including some of the major Everest record holders, with a chariot procession from the Nepal Tourism Board office at Bhrikutimandap to the Basantapur Durbar Square.

The summitters felicitated by Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Mr. Ram Kumar Shrestha included Mr. Reinhold Messner, the first person to climb Everest without oxygen, Mr. Furba Tashi Sherpa, the record 21-time summitters, and Mr. Ang Rita Sherpa, who climbed the Everest 10 times without oxygen. Other names were Mr. Kami Sherpa, who climbed Everest three times within nine days, Mr. Arjun Vajpayee, the former youngest Everest summitters of India, and Mr. Frits Vrijlandt, president of the Union of International Alpinist Association.

British Embassy also organized reception in honor of national and international Everest summitters to mark the historic occasion. On May 29, a special program was organized at Narayanhiiti Palace Museum in the presence of Chairman of Council of Minister Mr. Khil Raj Regmi as the chief guest. Letters of appreciation and medals were distributed to the record holder Everest summitters.

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"TOURISM, CIVIL AVIATION SITUATION ROSY" MINISTER SHRESTHA

The government has accorded high priority to developing the country's tourism. Tremendous investment has been pumped into infrastructure development in a bid to make tourism industry one of the major sources of economy and employment-generating sector.

Our major focus this year is on strengthening and capacity building of the national flag carrier, Nepal Airlines Corporation (NAC). An agreement to buy two narrow body aircraft from the European planemaker Airbus has been finalized. A loan agreement with the Employees Provident Fund to fund the aircraft has also been finalized.

The jets will arrive in Nepal within one and a half years and the plan has succeeded almost after 36 years. Besides, to invigorate the NAC, we have planned to lease two Airbus. In the domestic fleet, the process to bring back the grounded Twin Otters into service has been initiated. The ministry has started restructuring the NAC keeping up with the times. The process to acquire six small-sized aircraft from China has moved forward. Within a few months, we will be signing a loan agreement with China's EXIM Bank, which has shown interest in funding the project. In addition, the ministry plans to lease four more jets for the NAC once the ongoing lease process completes.

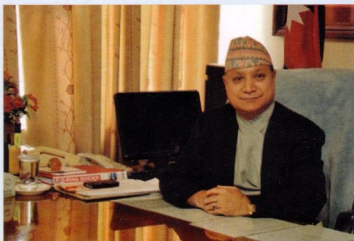
The ministry is conducting a feasibility study whether wide-body aircraft is feasible for the NAC or not. Based on the study and after conducting a cost analysis, the ministry will proceed with the matter. The national flag carrier is in dire need of aircraft as it has tremendous market untapped.

When it comes to civil aviation, we have accorded high priority to ensuring safer Nepali skies. We are more committed to significantly reduce air disaster. With the European Aviation Agency showing concern over Nepal's aviation's poor track record, we have also actively working on improving the airport infrastructure and quality of operators.

Presently, three major projects—Second International Airport (SIA) in Nijgadh, Regional International Airport in Pokhara and upgradation of Bhairahawa airport to Gautam Buddha Regional International Airport—have been moving forward. A government team inspected some airports in China that could be feasible for the proposed regional airport in Pokhara.

The ministry has started acquisition of additional 550 ropanies required for the proposed new airport. The Chinese contractor is conducting a detail project study of the airport, which is in the final stage. Once the contractor submits the report, we will sign a loan agreement with China's EXIM Bank.

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has given a green signal to release additional funds for the development of Gautam Buddha Regional International Airport. The cost to upgrade the airport has reached US\$ 90.6 million from US\$ 36 million. The government is also injecting some US\$ 29 million into the project.



**Ram Kumar Shrestha,
Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation**

Works on upgrading the country's sole international airport Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) has begun. As per the master plan, the airport will be upgraded into four phases. An understanding has been reached with Nepal Investment Board to carry out the whole phase of the development of TIA.

The process for the development of the SIA has also started. In coordination with the Investment Board, the government plans to call a global bid for the construction of the much-awaited project within 2-3 months. Besides, the ministry has started a number of cable car projects in different areas under the public private partnership model.

The ministry will also review the management and performance of different airports. Installation of advance and high performance radar at the TIA and Bhattedanda has begun. To make the Nepal Tourism Board (NTB) more professional, the ministry has started collecting experts' views on restructuring the body responsible for promotion of Nepal in the national and international arenas.

Regarding the cultural part, infrastructure development and preservation of temples, heritage sites and other religious sites of the Pashupati Development Trust and Lumbini Development Trust have started. Likewise, the ministry has earmarked budget for the refurbishing works of Manakamana Temple.

Observing diamond jubilee.....

During a programme held at Basantapur Durbar Square, Minister Shrestha said the government will adopt strict measures while issuing Mt Everest climbing permits to ensure mountaineers' safety. He said the government will verify climbers' experience, health and age before allowing them to climb the peak. The move is to ensure climbers' safety and also to stop overcrowding on Everest, Mr. Shrestha said.

"Apart from that, the government will speed up rescue measures for mountaineers, stop unauthorized broadcasting of Everest and enforce strict guidelines to prevent pollution in the Khumbu region," he said.

He added that the government's liaison officers in the Everest region will be mobilized in a more effective manner.

Secretary Ghimire, on the occasion, said Everest is an asset not only for the Nepalis, but for people all around the world. "The highest peak is open for all people. We cannot restrict or stop anyone from climbing the tallest mountain."

Sixty years ago on May 29, the Nepali flag was unfolded on the top of the world, which opened the gate for Nepal's tourism. In between 1953 to 2013, more than 4,000 individuals have climbed Everest.

"MoCTCA HAS TOURISM PLANS UP ITS SLEEVE"

In accordance with the government policy, the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation (MoCTCA) is not bringing new programmes for the next fiscal year 2013-14. However, we, the ministry, is committed to optimum utilization of the budget for the continuation of the past projects and programmes.

In the old programmes, we have accorded top priority to the continuation of the development of trekking routes, temples and shrines, beautification, setting of tourist information centres in different places and completing the construction of a number of view towers. We are mainly focused on the development of Karnali, Sise, Jaljala, Rara and Dhorpatan. Besides this, our full concentration this year will be on two pilgrim destinations--Dhanushadham in Janakpur and Kakre Bihar in Surkhet-- to promote

religious tourism. The ministry along with Mahabir Pun and Great Himalaya Development Project is working on a wireless internet project in trekking route of the Manaslu region.

The project will be accomplished by December this year. One of the major projects of the ministry in the next fiscal year will be drafting a strategic document for the 20-year tourism road map in coordination with national and international experts. We are in the process to invite bids for the project soon. Nepal is renowned for its nature and cultural allure in the international arena. But the full potential has not been realized yet due to lack of promotional activities and public awareness. As a result, we have not been benefitted fully.

The strategic paper will map out all the priority areas that the government as well as the private sector need to do work on. The document will be prepared in line with the successful stories of some of the renowned tourist destinations in the international arenas. Experts from the United Nations World Tourism Organizations will be hired for this.

The main aim is to ensure sustainable tourism development that will create employment in a large number so that it can be a major revenue earning sector and play a key role in alleviating poverty.

The DFID and SNV will also assist in the project. The ministry has earmarked Rs 2.5 million for the project and we expect contribution from the donor agencies as well. This year, the government has decided to allocate 30 percent of the revenue earned from the tourism sector to the development of mountain regions.

The MoCTCA has sent some royalty to 11 mountain districts. We expect that the royalty will help address the need of the mountain region and its development. The MoCTCA has planned installing GPS system in Solukhumbu district next fiscal year. To



Balkrishna Ghimire
Joint-secretary, Planning & Evaluation Division, MoCTCA

ensure safety of tourists in the Khumbu region, the MoCTCA plans to set up an integrated office in the Base Camp of Mt Everest. The office will help day-to-day monitoring of the expeditions team in the region.

The office will be manned by police, doctors and representative of National Parks, including the MoCTCA. Although the office will be temporary, the government representative will be sent to the region before the expedition season starts. If it succeeds in the Khumbu region, another office will be set up in the Manaslu region.

To promote village tourism, the ministry has accorded top priority to homestays in a number of districts. We have found that homestays has largely contributed to local economy. However, the promotion of homestay has not been on a full scale. In a few weeks, we have planned to invite bids for the upgradation of the Gautam Buddha airport in Lumbini into a regional international airport.

The Asian Development Bank has agreed to release additional funds for the project. Earlier, the project was estimated to cost US\$ 36 million. However, it was revised upward to US\$ 90.6 million.

Minister Shrestha vows to develop Sagarmatha region

Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation, Mr. Ram Kumar Shrestha, said the government is committed for the infrastructure development in the remote Khumbu Region of the Solukhumbu district. Mr. Shrestha said that investment in physical infrastructure like roads, bridges and among others facilities were necessary in the region, which is also one of the major tourist hub of the country.

Speaking at an interaction program organized in Kathmandu by the Solukhumbu Integrated Development Center, Mr. Shrestha said the royalty amount received from tourists visiting Sagarmatha region had not been mobilized to the district for the past four years. "As a result the government failed to invest in improving infrastructure in the region," he said, adding the government from this year has started disbursing the royalty and hoped it would address the infrastructure development need of the district.

Fact-finding panel to study NAC Jomsom crash

The Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation (MoCTCA) has formed a fact-finding committee to look into the crash of the Nepal Airlines Corporation's aircraft en-route to Jomsom from Pokhara. MoCTCA Spokesperson Mr. Mohan Krishna Sapkota said the committee is led by Mr. Ram Prasad Neupane, former Director General of the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN), comprises senior pilot of Tara Air Mr. Prabhakar Ghimire, senior aeronautical engineer Mr. Meghendra Kumar Shrestha and joint-secretary at the MoCTCA Mr. Buddhi Sagar Lamichhane.

The accident took place when the 9N-ABO DHC 6 twin otter aircraft skidded off the runway in course of landing at Jomsom Airport. Twenty one passengers, eight Japanese, including three crew members, were on board. However, there were no human casualties. The committee has a two-month deadline to submit the report.

Meanwhile, the MoCTCA has formed a separate investigation committee to report on Fishtail Air helicopter crash that took place in Humla. Retired Brigadier General of Nepal Mr. Army Gujman Lama will chair the committee that includes Colonel Mr. Dipak Bastola as member and Mr. Lamichhane as member-secretary. The helicopter was heading towards Simikot from Hilsa of Humla when it met with an accident. Tek Bahadur Patali, chief of the Simikot Airport, died in the crash. The committee has been given two months to complete its investigation.

Dead Sea stones on Mt Everest

A joint Nepali-Israeli team placed a monument brought from the Dead Sea — the lowest point on Earth — at the base of Mt Everest, the highest point on Earth. Meanwhile, a monument with embedded stones from the Everest region has been placed near the Dead Sea in Israel, completing the link between the two extreme points on Earth. The Dead Sea situated at 422 metres below sea level is known as the lowest point on Earth, whereas the 8,848-metre tall Everest is the highest mountain in the world. Mt Everest and Dead Sea Stones Exchange is the joint project of the Embassy of Israel in Kathmandu and Embassy of Nepal in Israel with a view to promoting tourism and friendship between the two countries. The ceremony to unveil the monument, which has stones from the Dead Sea embedded on it, was held at Namche Bazaar, Solukhumbu. In the first phase of the project, a monument containing stones from the Dead Sea in Israel was placed in Nepal's Mount Everest region on April 23. The joint team was led by Embassy of Israel in Kathmandu, Mayor of Tamar Regional Council-Dead Sea Israel Dov Litvinoff, Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Nepal, Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation in Nepal and the Nepal Tourism Board. Mayor Litvinoff along with Israeli artist Jojo Ohayon, who created the monument, brought the Dead Sea stones to Nepal for the ceremony. Israeli Ambassador to Nepal Hanan Goder said, "We are very happy and excited to announce that the monument brought from the lowest point on Earth, the Dead Sea, is on top of the world now."

Ambassador Goder said that the main objective of these projects is not only to promote natural beauty and cultural heritages of the two countries but also to mark the long standing and friendly relations between the two countries. "The idea is to further strengthen existing friendly ties between Nepal and Israel and bring it to the people-to-people level," he said. Speaking at the same function, Secretary at the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Sushil Ghimire expressed his happiness and excitement to announce the placing of monument brought from the Dead Sea at the base of Mt Everest. "Now we can enjoy the feelings of the Dead Sea at the highest point on Earth," Secretary Ghimire said. He also hoped that the initiative would encourage more tourists to visit the two regions. Mayor Litvinoff said that the successful completion of this project has brought Tamar Regional Council and Namche Bazaar "very close" and that the "two places are now friends", hinting that there will be increased cooperation between the two regions in the days to come. This project is a follow up of a joint activity in September 2012—issuance of Nepal-Israel joint postage stamps featuring the Dead Sea and Mt Everest.

On the other hand, the ceremony to place stones of the Everest region near the Dead Sea in Israel was held at the Ecological Park in the southern part of the Dead Sea.

Uzi Landau, the Tourism Minister of Israel, Prahlad Kumar Prasai, and Nepali Ambassador to Israel, Dov Litvinoff, Head of Tamar Region, Nadav Ben-Yehuda, a Mountaineer, diplomats and government officials were present during the function.

Minister Shrestha calls for Tokyo-Kathmandu direct flight

Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Mr. Ram Kumar Shrestha inaugurated the Everest Nepal Exhibition held at Tokyo Tower in Tokyo on June 1. Minister Shrestha had several bilateral meetings during his in Tokyo.

The Everest Nepal Exhibition held to commemorate the 16th anniversary of the conquest of the world's highest peak, Mt Everest by Sir Edmund Hillary of New Zealand and Tenzing Norgay Sherpa of Nepal on May 29, 1953, was jointly inaugurated by Minister Shrestha, Madam Kumiko Hashimoto, spouse of late Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, and veteran Sagarmatha hero, Uichiro Miura, on June 01.



The closing function of the Diamond Jubilee of the ascent of Mt Sagarmatha on June 2 was attended by another veteran alpinist, Junko Tabei who is the first woman to scale Mount Sagarmatha in 1975 and the first female to scale seven summits in all the continents in 1992.

A travel tour delegation from Nepal led by Mr. Ashok Pokhrel also took part in the exhibition that was attended by Nepalese and Japanese travel and tour operators, veteran mountaineers and thousands of Japanese nationals and members of the Nepalese Diaspora in Japan.

Mr. Shrestha had a bilateral meeting with Minoru Kiuchi, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During the meeting, Shrestha thanked the Government and the people of Japan for their continued support for Nepal's socio-economic development, conservation and development of Lumbini, sacred birthplace of Lord Buddha, institutionalization of peace and democratization of the country.

He further highlighted the importance of tourism in Nepal and thanked for the support of the Government of Japan in the upgradation of facility at the Tribhuvan International Airport. Shrestha raised the issue for further renewal of Air Service Agreement between Nepal and Japan and stressed on the need for having direct air services between Tokyo and Kathmandu.

Kunio Takahashi, Ambassador of Japan to Nepal, and senior officials of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, had joined the meeting from the Japanese side. Kiuchi stressed the importance of bilateral relationship between Japan and Nepal.

MOCTCA ACTIVITIES

He told that Japan was very keen to support Nepal on her pursuance of the policy of enhancing the pace of socio-economic development and hoped that the Constitution Assembly election would pave the way for Nepal's rapid advancement, political stability and full-fledged democratization. Similarly, Shrestha had a bilateral meeting with Yosuke Tsuruh, Parliamentary Senior Vice- Minister for Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism of Japan.

During the meeting, issues related to tourism promotion between Nepal and Japan and their importance for bilateral relations were discussed. Shrestha also had a bilateral meeting with Toshihiro Nikai, President, Japan-Nepal Parliamentary Friendship League, and a ranking leader of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). During the meeting, Nikai recalled his experience on Nepal and in particular the tourism promotion between two countries.

Shrestha also had a bilateral meeting with Nobuo Kishi, Member, House of Representatives and Chief of Foreign Affairs Department of the LDP. The LDP is the biggest political organization in Japan and has been ruling the country for most of the period in the post-War period.

Buddha Jayanti celebrations in Lumbini

A special programme was organized to mark the 2557th Birth Anniversary of Lord Buddha in Lumbini. Chairman of Interim Election Council of Ministers Mr. Khil Raj Regmi inaugurated a special programme to mark Buddha Jayanti. Chairman Regmi, who is also the patron of the Lumbini Development Trust (LDT), said the government has accorded priority to develop Lumbini as per the Lumbini Master Plan. He said that the government would make a needful support for the LDT.

The philosophy of peace and non-violence propounded by Lord Buddha is still relevant to all societies of the present time, Chairman Regmi said.

Addressing the same programme, Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation (MoCTCA) Mr. Ram Kumar Shrestha said the government would leave no stone unturned to develop Lumbini as per the master plan. Minister Shrestha, also the Chairman of LDT, said the government would take all initiatives to spread the value and importance of Lumbini around the world.

Acharya Karma Syangbo Sherpa, Vice President of LDT, urged the government to help complete the remaining projects under the Lumbini Master Plan, which was jointly recognized by the United Nations and Nepal in 1978.

Sri Lankan Ambassador to Nepal, WM Semiwinartham said that Buddha who inspired the world community to forsake the path of violence and adopt the path of peace is not only an inspiration for Nepal but for the entire world.

A messages sent by President Dr Ram Baran Yadav and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon were read out at the function presided over by Chairman of the Anandakuti Vihar Bhikkhu Dharmamurti. The relic of the Buddha brought from the Ram Chaitya in Sri Lanka was also put on display which was seen by some 100 thousand devotees

NAMD marks third anniversary

Chairman of Interim Election Government Mr. Khil Raj Regmi attended the celebration of the third anniversary of Nepal Academy of Music and Drama (NAMD) in Kathmandu.

Chairman Regmi, speaking at the programme, said music and drama are the mediums that help expose the social realities and promote hidden cultures and arts all over the world. He stressed the importance of developing music and arts in line with the changing times carrying forward the age-old traditions and cultures.

At the same event, Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Mr. Ram Kumar Shrestha appealed to all academicians to work together for the development and promotion of Nepali arts, culture, music and drama.

Member secretary of NAMD Mr. Achyut Prasad Phuyal highlighted the importance of academies in Nepal in preserving and promoting creative arts, including Nepali music, drama and culture nationally and internationally. The NAMD anniversary celebrations also featured a special musical performance by renowned Nepali and international artists.

2 Nepali manuscripts on UN's Memory of World Register

Two Nepali manuscripts of world significance are now in the World Register of United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Memory of the World Register.

The Nisvasattatvasamhita, the earliest surviving tantric manuscript, and the Susrutasamhita, the oldest document in the field of Ayurveda medicine, have been added on June 18, to the prestigious list recognizing documentary heritage of outstanding value. They are the first inscriptions from Nepal in the Register.

"I congratulate Nepal for the inscriptions of the two manuscripts in the Memory of the World Register. I am confident that their inclusion in the Register contributes to creating greater awareness of the need to preserve Nepal's memory held in the country's archives and libraries", says Axel Plathe, UNESCO representative to Nepal.

The Nisvasattatvasamhita Manuscript, which is deposited at the National Archives, is said to be the earliest surviving tantric manuscript and as such it is important source for the early history of tantrism. It has had a great influence in shaping other tantric texts. Tantrism has had impact on many major Asian religions and even influenced Islam practiced in India. The Western World has been influenced by tantras through the practice of yoga, which has its roots in tantrism (Bjornnes) as well as through the New Age groups in America.

The 1134 year old palm leaf manuscript of the Susrutasamhita (Sahottatrantra), held by the Kaiser Library in Kathmandu, is considered as the oldest document in the field of Ayurveda medicine, a systematic and formal tradition of healing that became South Asia's principal medical system and has profoundly influenced all cultures surrounding South Asia including Tibet, Central Asia, China, South-East Asia and the Middle East.

The manuscript focuses especially on surgery and discusses various kinds of diseases related to heart, skin, gynecology, etc. It also describes various methods and use of herbs in curing diseases.

The two manuscripts from Nepal are among 54 new additions to the Memory of the World Register, approved yesterday by UNESCO Director-General Irina Bokova.

Among the others are The Life and Works of Ernesto Che Guevara: from the original manuscripts of his adolescence and youth to the campaign Diary in Bolivia, presented by Bolivia and Cuba; the Pages of Testimony Collection, Yad Vashem Jerusalem, 1954-2004, presented by Israel; and Maha Lawkammarazein or Kuthodaw Inscription Shrines, presented by Myanmar. The Memory of the World Register now includes a total of 299 documents and document collections from the five continents, safeguarded on various supports from stone to celluloid and parchment to sound recordings.

UNESCO established the Memory of the World Programme in 1992. Impetus came originally from a growing awareness of the parlous state of preservation of, and access to, documentary heritage in many parts of the world.

Fifth National Tourism Fair

Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation (MoCTCA) Mr. Ram Kumar Shrestha inaugurated the 5th National Tourism Fair 2013 on May 10. The fair was organized with an objective of identifying tourism destinations and promoting internal tourism in Nepal. Various travel trade organizations and the government officials attended the function organized at Bhrikutimandap in Kathmandu under the slogan "Let's travel our country first then only abroad".

MOCTCA ACTIVITIES

Inaugrating the fair, Minister Shrestha said the Nepal Tourism Board should concentrate on investing in domestic tourism promotion. Despite Nepal getting popular around the world for its appealing natural heritages, including diverse traditions and cultures, the tourism potential has never been realized due to limited air connectivity and lack of promotion, Shrestha said. "We are in the process of buying two aircraft for the Nepal Airlines Corporation (NAC) and add two more aircraft under a lease agreement," he added. "This will help the NAC expand its network in number of tourist destinations."

On the same occasion, Secretary of Ministry for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Mr. Sushil Ghimire said that efforts were underway to exempt royalty fees for climbing the mountain peaks in the Far West region.

Secretary Ghimire underscored the need to explore new tourism destinations. He maintained that new products need to be explored in accordance with the changing choices of foreign visitors. The fair was organized to create public awareness among all people that tourism could be a vital tool to raise living standard of rural people.

Mr. Subash Niroula, Officiating Chief Executive Officer of Nepal Tourism Board, said many obstacles such as strikes and bandas to organizing tourism fairs deter tourists from coming to Nepal. He said that the Board has already organized three different regional tourism fairs in Dharan, Dhangadi and Nepalgunj.

The fair was participated by travel trade entrepreneurs from 50 districts. Around 110 stalls of tourism organizations, government and non-government organizations, district development committees, trusts and development committees, tourism publications, and other industries took part in the fair.

Training for women trekking guides

The Mountain Academy Nepal (Parbatiya Praschichen Pratisthan) under the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation (MoCTCA) is conducting a 45-day (36 days practical and 9 days theoretical) trekking guide training for women to make them qualified as per the international standards in the mountaineering activities. The MoCTCA has earmarked Rs 1 million for this while the academy will arrange other needed resources. Twenty women are currently participating in the training. The aim is to produce qualified human resource for mountaineering and trekking activities.



It will also help people, particularly women, to be more professional. Its objective is to increase employment and women participation in mountaineering activities by providing them with the training of international standards. A Mountaineering Academy Training Centre has been established in Garma in Solukhumbu district. The academy was established with an objective to provide training of international standards up to diploma level in the field of mountaineering and high altitude trekking. Besides, it provides a practical and technical knowledge to enhance the skill and efficiency of the Nepali people as well as foreigners eyeing their careers in the adventure tourism field.

Pact to promote Great Himalaya Trail

The Great Himalaya Trail Development Programme (GHTDP) and Tara Air have signed an agreement to promote tourism destinations within Nepal. With the support of SNV Nepal and funding by the UK Department for International Development DFID / UKAid, the GHTDP aims to increase the number of tourists and pro-poor tourism investments in less visited and under-developed districts, thereby spreading tourism benefits more widely among impoverished mountain communities.

Addressing the programme, Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation (MoCTCA) Mr. Ram Kumar Shrestha said the whole idea of joining hands with GHT is to promote other destinations, which are equally beautiful and enthralling.

"This initiative will help grow the tourism sector in our country," he said, adding that GHT is one of the best tourism products to attract a large number of visitors to Nepal from around the world.



Tara Air will include GHT information in its entire origin and destination airport boarding passes and distribute GHT information flyers, posters and route maps through Tara Air and Yeti Airlines seat pockets.

This initiative will accelerate and extend GHT's visibility among the large number of domestic and international tourists who fly with Tara Air and Yeti Airlines.

GHT is one of the longest and highest trekking trails in the world. The 1,700-km route connects popular treks in the Annapurna and Everest regions with exciting new trekking destinations from Taplejung in the East to Humla and Darchula in the West.

DESTINATIONS

KHAPTAD, THE WILD WEST

Khaptad is the land of grassland and forests. Its rich geography ranges from high mountains to deep gorges and mid-elevation plateaus. The diverse landscape of Khaptad is filled with subtropical, temperate and sub alpine vegetation. This place offers trekking ranging from short easy hikes to strenuous ones, religious sightseeing in several sacred sites, quite rejuvenation in its pristine surroundings and the rich cultural experience of far-west Nepal.

Khaptad is the meeting point of Bajhang, Bajura, Doti and Achham districts. Smooth plateaus round up the horizons and serene lakes rest below; curves and lines intersecting to make these dune-like hillocks, capped by pine forests above and grazed by abandoned cattle below. In winter, the plateaus are covered with blankets of snow, but the trees rise high, almost untouched.



One of its main attractions is the Khaptad National Park established in 1984. Located in mid-mountains, the park is a rich natural habitat and has also gained religious significance as home of Khaptad Swami, the renowned hermit. There are several places of natural and religious significance inside and outside the park.

The park at 3,000 meter is rich in its flora and fauna variety with sub-tropical forests of Chir pine at lower altitude and sub-alpine forests or fir, hemlock, oak and rhododendron in the higher areas. The area boasts around 224 species of medicinal herbs and is described as living garden of herbs and a museum of natural history. It is estimated that around 567 species, 11 percent of flowering plants of Nepal are found in Khaptad. The park also offers excellent bird watching opportunities, with 270 species of the winged creature, the common ones being different varieties of Impheyan pheasant, partridges, flycatchers, bulbuls, cuckoos and eagles. The park is also fairly rich in its varieties of wild animals, common ones being barking deer, wild dog, wild boar, ghoral, Himalayan Black Bear, Yellow Throated Marten, Rhesus Monkey and Langur Monkey.

Access

Khaptad National Park lies in Seti Zone. The gateway to Khaptad is Silgarhi Bazaar in Doti district, from where the park headquarters is 50 kilometre and almost two-day trek away. The best way to reach Silgarhi is via Attariya Chowk. Buses are available at the Central bus station, Gongabu, in Kathmandu and transportation to Silgarhi is available at Attariya Chowk. Another option is a flight to Dhangadi from where one can drive to Silgarhi Bazaar. The Park also can be reached easily from India via the western entry point of Nepal at Gadda Chowki, Mahendranagar. Silgarhi Bazaar is approximately 10-hour drive from Mahendranagar, while Mahendranagar is 30-minute drive from the Indian border town of Banbasa, from where buses depart to Delhi every hour a day.

Accommodation

Trekkers and travelers to Khaptad should be self sufficient in terms of food and accommodation as there are not many commercial lodges to cater tourists' needs. There is only one tea shop as of record. Various camp sites are available and home stay could be possible if arrangements are made beforehand. In addition there is a government guest house available near Khaptad Swami Ashram.



The best time to visit Khaptad is during autumn and spring—October–November and March–May. During autumn several festivals are held here. As fair is held at Tribeni near Khaptad, every Dashain which falls in October and another fair is also held at Khaptad Daha around the same time at the end of the summer.

Summer here is cool and wet with temperature ranging from 0 to 18-degree Celsius, while winter are cold and dry with temperature sometimes below 18-degree. The monsoon rain occurs between May–September. Snowfall occurs during the extreme winter months.

Religious Significance

Khaptad is a place of high religious significance. The religious and cultural values of this place were highly enhanced after the Khaptad Swami 53 years ago. The area is believed to have been the centre of civilization that covered South West Tibet, Far West Nepal, Kumaon and Garhwal.

Ashram of Khaptad Baba is the area where the famous Khaptad Baba dwelled. The ashram located at Tribeni is an important destination for pilgrims and tourists. The meditation areas include temples of lower Tribeni. There is no entrance restriction for visitors. In the core zone, however, gazing animals, felling firewood and activities like alcohol drinking, smoking, animal slaughtering are prohibited.

Sailesworī is one of the most famous religious stops on the way to Khaptad from Attariya Chowk, Kailali. The temple of goddess Sailesworī in Silgarhi, Doti, comprises temples of Ganesh and Masto. Silgarhi Bazaar, a historical town, is the main business center of Far West Nepal.

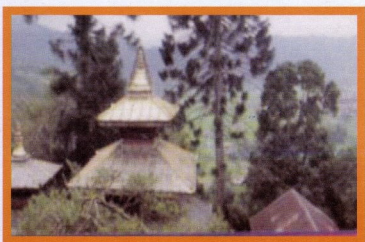
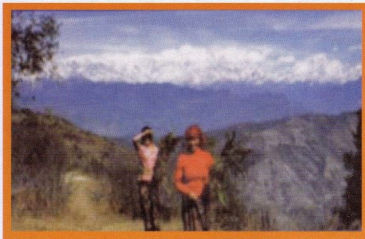
Ramaroshan is another religious site lying in Achham district. It is also called Pancha Pura in Hindu scriptures and is attached to the stories of Pauranic Age. The site is famous for the five historical cities connected to the stories of Goddess Parvati. In addition, there are 12 lakes that are good for bird watching. There are also remains of old historical buildings that make this region important for archaeological point of view.

Badimalika houses the temple of Mallika Devi and is situated at an altitude of 4,153 metres in Bajura district. It is believed that Goddess Sati, Shiva's Consort, was reborn as Parvati in this holy area. From this place, one can observe the enchanting views of Himalayas. The time between April and October is ideal to visit Badimalika. One can reach this place from Khaptad National Park within 8–10 day trek.

Surma Sarovar at 4,307 meters is a holy and beautiful lake site in Bajhang. A temple dedicated to Surma Devi is situated near the lake. Hindus believe that Surma Devi is the incarnation of Goddess Kali. Mt Kailash in Tibet believed to be the abode of Lord Shiva can be seen from Surma Sarovar, which is 3-day trek from Khaptad National Park.

MANICHUD AND MORE

Manichud, situated in Shivapuri-Nagarjung National Park area, is a sacred place of religious and historical significance. It is also one of the unexplored tourist destinations gifted with abundant cultural and natural beauty. The famous Manichud Pond (Manichud Kund) is one of the attractions of the site situated at an altitude of 2,378 meters from the sea level. The history of Manichud dates back to the century long Buddhist era 2514 (Buddha Sambat 2514). Manichud area has one of the oldest inscriptions of Maharani Ganga (Queen Ganga). The historic site has Ganesh Temple, Manichud pond, statue of Lord Buddha, Mahadev Temple, Pancha Buddha and a statue of King Manichud, which bears the inscription of taking out pearl from the King's forehead using a cutting machine. A special fair (mela) is organized every year during Janai Purnima. Manichud is also the center of various tribes, culture and religion.



Myth and Religious Belief

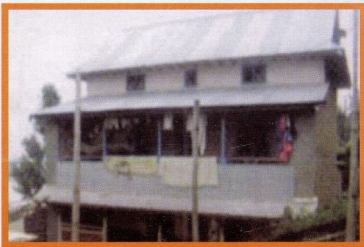
According to ancient mythology, the Manichud Kund existence comes under the name of Manichud King of Sanketu. Buddhists especially consider this pond very holy. In the ancient time, an ascetic King Manichud was performing Tapasya residing in a cave near the pond. One day the King knew that people residing in the peripheral villages are suffering from plague. To control the disease he had an idea – to dip the mani or crystal stone from his forehead to the pond and by using the water he would help people recover from the disease. He also knew that if he took mani from his forehead he would die instantly. But for the betterment of his people he didn't bother about his own life and he dipped the mani in the pond and the water healed everyone. After taking the mani from his forehead he died but he was transformed into shila (sculpture). This shila still exists there. One who comes and takes bath in Falgunkrishna Saptami, Chaitrapurnima and Sangrantis gets relieved by all fears, it is also believed that he gets the blessing as of performing Ashwamegh. As of now, there are three Stupas in Manichud area of different god. Manichud area holds tremendous potential of religious tourism. Its religious and historical importance is one of the attracting factors for pilgrimages. Besides, there are numbers of trekking routes in the area and hiking routes is most popular in the area.

Homestay at Manichud Area

Manichud area is home to the traditionally rich Tamang community. Ghumarchowk, situated at the heart of Bajrayogini Temple, proposed for inclusion in the world heritage site list, and Manichud Kund-- have 10 home stays. Visitors can enjoy a warm hospitality and observe the tradition, culture, and lifestyle of the Tamang community just a few hours from Kathmandu. The area provides an opportunity to view the Capital city from the area. It is reachable through the following routes:

- A 9-km hiking from Kathmandu to Sankhu-Bajrayogini-Ghumarichowk.
- Kathmandu-Panipokharib, Sundarijal route.
- Kathmandu-Sankhu-Jarshingpauwa, Jhule and Nagarkot's Kartike Bhanjyang, Jarshing pauwa-Jhule.

This area has also a trail for mountain biking. Unlike other suburbs and historical importance sites of Kathmandu, it has remained untouched because of its religious significance and importance. The site is revered by both Hindus and Buddhists. The area also offers panoramic views of Ganesh Himal, Langtang and Jugal Himal and Manaslu.



PLAN AND POLICY

Double insurance coverage for high-altitude staffs

The Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation (MoCTCA) has made an upward revision of the insurance coverage amounts of policies covering mountain guides, high-altitude workers and porters, liaison officers, search and rescue officials and workers of mountain base camps.

A ministry-level meeting on May 29 took the decision to this effect. Under the Mountaineering Expedition Regulation 2002, the concerned authorities have been directed to double the existing coverage amounts for mountaineering and search and rescue officials. The revised scheme will be implemented by January 1, 2014.

The medical insurance coverage amount for these workers has been raised by 500 percent to Rs 300,000 per person. The revision of the policy aims to address social security of the mountaineering workers who despite working tirelessly have nominal insurance cover. "These high-altitude workers or search and rescue officials are involved in high risk and dangerous job, which pays well, but have nominal insurance coverage," said Mr. Purna Chandra Bhattarai, joint-secretary at the Tourism Industry Division of the Tourism Ministry.

As per the revised policy, personal accident insurance and workers compensation insurance of the Sirdar (mountain climbing) or the mountain guide has been doubled to a minimum Rs 1 million from Rs 500,000.

For high-altitude workers, the insurance coverage has been raised to Rs 1 million from Rs 400,000. The government has increased the personal accident insurance and workers compensation insurance for the officials involved in emergency search and rescue operation by 150 percent to \$10,000.

Insurance coverage for workers of base camps and local porters has been raised by 128 percent to Rs 800,000 and 100 percent to Rs 500,000, respectively.

Personal accident insurance and workers compensation insurance for government-mobilized liaison officers in the mountain region has been raised by 33 percent to Rs 800,000.

As per the regulation, the mountaineering expedition team will insure, from the insurance companies as recognized by the government, of the mountain guide, high-altitude workers and base camp workers of their personal accident.

MoCTCA to restructure NAC, NTB

The Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation (MoCTCA) has formed two separate committees to recommend structural and functional restructuring of the Nepal Airlines Corporation (NAC) and the Nepal Tourism Board (NTB). While one committee is led by Mr. Purna Chandra Bhattarai, joint-secretary of the ministry, the other is headed by Mr. Ranjan Krishna Aryal, joint-secretary of the MoCTCA.

Two organizations—NAC and NTB under the MoCTCA, are entrusted to play a vital role in Nepal's tourism promotion in both national and international arenas. However, they are underperforming due to various reasons.

Bhattarai has been asked to carry out an assessment for structural and functional changes at the NTB to make it more professional.

"As it has been more than 15 years since the NTB has been working under the same objective and same organizational structure, the ministry thinks it's time for its functional reforms in line with the changing scenario," said MoCTCA Secretary Mr. Sushil Ghimire. The NTB has been facing multiple problems. For instance, the NTB board has been struggling to appoint its new Chief Executive Officer and has remained headless for the last two years. Besides, the budget allocated for the promotion of tourism has not been effectively mobilized. "The committee will evaluate the existing structure and its functioning style and recommend for needed changes," said Secretary Ghimire, who also chairs the NTB board. NTB was established in 1998 as an autonomous body to function as a model agency with public-private partnership approach.

Meanwhile, the MoCTCA plans to convert the troubled national flag carrier into a public limited company. Secretary Ghimire said there are a lot of options for the government— either operating it under the public private partnership model or bringing in a strategic partner. "Besides, there are a number of Acts and regulations that need to be amended in line with the current trend so that the NAC can compete in the international market," Mr. Ghimire said.

MoCTCA officials visit China to study airport model

On the invitation of the Government of China, senior officials of the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation (MoCTCA) and the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) went to China and observed various airport models there.

The visit was to study the airport models of China, which could be feasible for the proposed Regional International Airport in Pokhara. The proposed airport site is 3-km east from the existing domestic airport in Pokhara. The team was led by Mr. Ranjan Krishna Aryal, joint-secretary of the MoCTCA.

The Nepal government is scheduled to sign a commercial agreement with the Chinese contractor to develop the airport by August. The Nepalese team visited Beijing International Airport and Chengdu International Airport in China, among others. The government has received green signal for the development of the airport after the lowest bidder expressed its willingness to develop the airport at the government-estimated cost. The airport bidding process had been put on hold since July 2012, after the Chinese contractor quoted 85 percent higher than the government-estimated cost for the project.

On February 9, 2012, the CAAN had invited bids to build the airport under the Engineering Procurement and Construction model. On July 18, 2012, CAAN's tender evaluation committee had opened financial proposals for the project.

A detailed study of the project was conducted by the government in 1989 in coordination with the Japan International Cooperation Agency. The project has been in limbo since 1975 when the government acquired more than 3,106 ropanies of land. Pokhara is Nepal one of the major tourism hubs with around 400,000 tourists visiting the lake city annually.

Every NAC cloud has a silver lining

The Nepal Airlines Corporation (NAC) on June 27 sealed the order for two Airbus A320-200 planes by signing an aircraft purchase agreement with the European planemaker. The agreement was signed between NAC Managing Director Mr. Madan Kharel and Airbus Senior Sales Director Mr. Sheel Sukla at the NAC headquarters in Kathmandu, formalizing the memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed between the two sides on April 6. Airbus will deliver one of the two A320-200 aircraft in February 2015. The second one will arrive in April.



"NAC's aircraft procurement process has finally succeeded after a hiatus five years," said Mr. Kharel, Managing Director of NAC, after signing the agreement. On June 18, the NAC signed a Rs 10 billion loan agreement with the Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) to buy the two aircraft.

NAC sped up the jet purchase process with Airbus after receiving green signal from its Board, which followed a Cabinet decision on February 11, 2013. On August 1, 2012, the government had decided to be a guarantor for the NAC and directed the formal jet purchase process. The national flag carrier has been struggling to operate its international routes with two ageing Boeing 757s. The latest of the two planes was delivered to the NAC in 1978. Since then, every effort to expand NAC's international fleet had failed. The Immediate Governance and Economy Reform Action Plan 2012, unveiled by the Prime Minister's Office in October 2012, directed the Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation (MoCTCA) and the Ministry of Finance (MoF) to procure two aircraft for NAC's international fleet as every previous effort had been mired in controversy.



In addition, the NAC has invited bids for dry lease of two narrow-body Airbus A320-200 jets from international aircraft manufacturers or leasing companies. The national flag carrier wants to lease the aircraft for five years to prevent a shutdown of its international service.

It plans to bring one of the two jets by October-end and the second aircraft six months later. Over the last decade, the number of international destinations of the NAC has been slashed from 21 to four. The NAC used to operate flights to Amsterdam, Colombo, Dhaka, Frankfurt, Karachi, London, Osaka, Paris, Shanghai, Singapore and Vienna besides five Indian cities – Bangalore, Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai and Patna. Presently, it connects Doha, Kuala Lumpur, Hong Kong and Bangkok.

The NAC plans to launch services to Guangzhou and Shanghai in China besides resuming flights to its old destinations once it gets the plane. The Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) stats show that international travellers' movement (inbound and outbound) increased 8.33 percent to 2.9 million in 2012. Of the total number of travellers, 6 percent flew NAC planes. Meanwhile, the MoCTCA has formed a committee to recommend structural and functional restructuring of the NAC. The committee is led by Mr. Ranjan Krishna Aryal, joint-secretary of the MoCTCA. MoCTCA Secretary Mr. Sushil Ghimire said there are a lot of options for the government—either operating the NAC under the Public Private Partnership model or bringing in a strategic partner.

NAC TURNS 56

The Nepal Airlines Corporation (NAC) marked its 55th Anniversary on July 1 amid the presence of Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation (MoCTCA) Mr. Ram Kumar Shrestha and other top government officials. On the occasion, Minister Shrestha urged the NAC employees to be serious about the organization's future rising above petty interests.



Minister Shrestha honored 125 staffs completing their 25 years in service in the corporation. Chairman of NAC Board of Directors and Secretary at the MoCTCA, Mr. Sushil Ghimire, said that the ministry has formed a committee to carry out a study on structural changes of the NAC as per the need of the hour.

Managing Director of NAC Mr. Madan Kharel said they have started a process to purchase new aircraft for domestic flights with the loan assistance of China.

The NAC was incorporated on July 1, 1958 through the enactment of Nepal Airlines Corporation Act-2019.

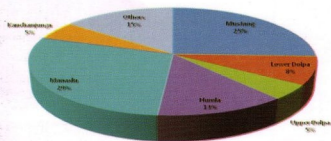
TABLE 5: TOURIST ARRIVAL BY FISCAL YEAR, 2047/48-2068/69

Fiscal Year	Third Country	Indian	Total	%Change
2047/48	187,821	82,686	270,507	-0.8
2048/49	217,313	107,053	324,366	19.9
2049/50	219,337	86,949	306,286	-5.6
2050/51	222,375	94,597	316,972	3.5
2051/52	230,158	116,022	346,180	9.2
2052/53	262,448	117,853	380,301	9.9
2053/54	273,477	128,809	402,286	5.8
2054/55	301,636	138,647	440,283	9.4
2055/56	336,713	141,061	477,774	8.5
2056/57	359,043	100,307	459,350	-3.9
2057/58	362,330	86,401	448,731	-2.3
2058/59	229,873	59,127	289,000	-35.6
2059/60	218,972	76,707	295,679	2.3
2060/61	291,629	96,414	388,043	31.2
2061/62	262,461	78,640	341,101	-12.1
2062/63	288,087	103,085	391,172	14.7
2063/64	361,382	101,198	462,580	18.3
2064/65	431,289	90,009	521,298	12.7
2065/66	400,249	91,558	491,807	-5.7
2066/67	445,572	101,360	546,932	11.2
2067/68	524,948	141,067	666,015	21.8
2068/69	628,996	174,146	803,142	20.6

Fiscal Year means July 16-July 15 of the respective year.

TABLE 57: REGISTERED HOMESTAY MANAGEMENT BY TYPE AND AFFILIATED HOUSE, ROOM AND BED, 2012

District	Type	No. of Affiliated House	No. of Room	No. of Bed
Kathmandu	Community	0	0	0
	Private	3	10	17
	Total	3	10	17
Kavre	Community	0	0	0
	Private	1	2	4
	Total	1	2	4
Lalitpur	Community	0	0	0
	Private	2	6	12
	Total	2	6	12
Mugu	Community	5	5	10
	Private	0	0	0
	Total	5	5	10
Nuwakot	Community	25	33	66
	Private	0	0	0
	Total	25	33	66
Ramechhap	Community	6	15	30
	Private	1	3	6
	Total	7	18	36
Total	Community	36	53	106
	Private	7	21	39
	Total	43	74	145

CHART 7: NUMBER OF TREKKERS IN DIFFERENT TREKKING AREAS, 2042**Editorial Board****Balkrishna Ghimire**

Joint Secretary

Janak Raj Bhatta

Under Secretary

Nirajan Ghimire

Section Officer

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